

Our Lady of Guadalupe



The province of Estremadura, in the Kingdom of Spain, is one of the prettiest in the world. In its bosom, nestling between high rocks, rises a temple, one of the most revered national santuaries in the land-the Church of our Lady of Guadalupe, which means "clear water." For all around rippling rivulets flow in the shadow of the towering trees, and at the holy shrine many have already found a healing balm for body and soul. The statue is of very great age, for it was presented by Pope Gregory in the year 505 to St. Leander of Sevilla. Ever since this sanctuary has been a shrine of devout pilgrimage. No wonder that the adventurous conquistadores who followed Hernando Cortez to Mexico felt the sting of homesickness when in the far off land of Anahuac they thought of Estremadura, its holy shrine and its sparkling waters. And the heart of the Holy Mother could not forget the knightly sons who carried her banner to distant worlds and chanted her Ave on the other side of the dark ocean. She longed to be among her children, and her wish was accomplished in that simple manner she loves so well. The legend gives the story thus: On December 9th, in the year 1531, a poor Indian by the name of Juan Diego, of the town of Tolpetlak, was on his way to hear the holy mass, as he was accustomed to do every Saturday morning. Diego, or as his native name was Coquanhizin, was a poor man and a slave of a Cazik before the arrival of the Spaniards. In his 28th year himself and his wife were baptized by the Franciscan Fathers who had crossed the sea in 1523. From that time on they led a life of holy virginity. On his way to the chapel Diego had to pass a hill, the summit of which had formerly been crowned by a temple of Tonantsin. Innumerable human lives had been sacrificed before her altar. Arriving at